

OREGON HOME HEALTH CARE AND
MEDICARE

HON. GREG WALDEN

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 25, 2012

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the House about an issue of particular importance to seniors and health care patients in Oregon's 70,000 square-mile Second District: access to home health care. Some counties in my largely rural district are without a single hospital or physician, meaning finding care can be difficult. Fortunately, however, each of the 20 counties in the district does have skilled, dedicated home health providers willing to care for those in need.

Ninety-six percent of all Medicare spending goes toward patients with more than one chronic disease, and sixty-six percent of the program's funds are used for those with five or more chronic conditions. With ten thousand new Medicare beneficiaries added every day, we must work to ensure the program's long-term sustainability.

Fortunately for Medicare, home health care providers go above and beyond to deliver high-quality, clinically effective, efficient care, and many medical treatments that were once offered in hospital or nursing home settings are now being safely and more cost-efficiently provided in patients' homes. Further, the home health and hospice industry helps fuel the economy with nearly 1.5 million jobs nationwide.

I have seen first-hand the compassionate and highly skilled care home health nurses provide to patients. My wife Mylene and I have seen it on a personal level with our own families, and talked to numerous Oregonians who are grateful for the opportunity to recover in their own home with their spouse and loved ones by their side.

In addition to being good for patients, home health is also good for federal taxpayers. When seniors choose home health, they stay in their own beds, pay their own utilities, do their own laundry, and provide for their own meals. This is also often supplemented by family members who help keep them safe and well in the place they most want to be—their home. When Medicare covers the costs of room and board and 24 hour care in more expensive institutional settings, taxpayers spend thousands of dollars they would otherwise save in home health settings.

Unfortunately, however, for the majority of compassionate, skilled home health providers truly dedicated to the patients they serve, a narrow sliver of operators are tarnishing their good work. MedPAC has found that a small number of bad actors in just 25 counties nationwide are disproportionately taking advantage of Medicare beneficiaries and taxpayers.

According to MedPAC's figures, the total number of home health providers in these top 25 highest spending counties rose from 290 in 2005 to 775 in 2009, an increase of over 167 percent. During this time, Medicare payments to these providers went from \$592 million to \$1.6 billion, a 163 percent increase in taxpayer spending.

In Oregon during that same time period, the total number of providers, as well as overall Medicare reimbursement, actually decreased. These figures confirm what many of us in Or-

egon have been saying for years: when it comes to waste, fraud, and abuse in the health care system, Oregon providers as a whole are not the problem.

So while no State is 100 percent without fault, and while every provider should make it their goal to act only in the best interest of their patients, these figures have shown us the main source of abuse. Therefore, any future home health proposal should target these higher spending counties rather than indiscriminately harming the good players in the industry. Isolating and rooting out fraud simply makes sense for providers, patients, and taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, while we can always do more to ensure access to health care services in rural areas like Oregon's Second District, I take comfort in knowing that there are many home health providers willing to serve seniors in Oregon and elsewhere. Because of these dedicated providers, patients receive the care they need in the comfort of their homes, with their families and loved ones at their side.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DAVE THOMAS FOUNDATION FOR ADOPTION

HON. PATRICK J. TIBERI

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 25, 2012

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption on the occasion of its 20th anniversary.

The Foundation was established in 1992 by Dave Thomas as a public charity with one primary goal: to help every child in foster care find a loving, permanent family. Throughout its history, the Foundation has set forth on a mission of dramatically increasing the number of adoptions of waiting children.

For 20 years, the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption has committed itself to finding permanent families for the more than 100,000 children waiting in the United States foster care system.

The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption awards grants to public and private adoption agencies all across the country. Last year these grants totaled more than \$8 million and focused on supporting adoption professionals who implement proactive, child-focused recruitment programs targeted exclusively on moving the longest-waiting children from foster care into adoptive families. This signature program is Wendy's Wonderful Kids (WWK).

The results from an empirical five-year case study on WWK were released in October, 2011. The research showed that children in the program are up to three times more likely to be adopted.

The Foundation also supports employers through the Adoption-Friendly Workplace program, is a founding member of National Adoption Day, and is a proud partner of the annual television special, *A Home for the Holidays*.

The Foundation is an accredited charity of the Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance, Standards for Excellence certified, and has received the highest possible rating on Charity Navigator. The Foundation has helped more than 3,000 children find their forever families and provided information and support to tens of thousands of potential adoptive families.

For these reasons, I am proud to applaud the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption and its dedicated staff for their extraordinary contributions to the people of Ohio's 12th Congressional District and throughout the United States.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate on February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place, and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled, and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Tuesday, June 26, 2012 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

JUNE 27

10 a.m.

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Business meeting to consider S. 2345, to amend the District of Columbia Home Rule Act to permit the Government of the District of Columbia to determine the fiscal year period, to make local funds of the District of Columbia for a fiscal year available for use by the District upon enactment of the local budget act for the year subject to a period of Congressional review, S. 2178, to require the Federal Government to expedite the sale of underutilized Federal real property, S. 2170, to amend the provisions of title 5, United States Code, which are commonly referred to as the "Hatch Act" to eliminate the provision preventing certain State and local employees from seeking elective office, clarify the application of certain provisions to the District of Columbia, and modify the penalties which may be imposed for certain violations under subchapter III of chapter 73 of that title, S. 2234, to prevent human trafficking in government contracting, S. 2239, to direct the head of each agency to treat relevant military training as sufficient to satisfy training or certification requirements for Federal licenses, H.R. 915, to establish a Border Enforcement Security Task Force program to enhance border security by fostering coordinated efforts among Federal, State, and local border and law enforcement officials to protect United States border cities and communities from trans-national crime, including violence associated with drug trafficking, arms smuggling, illegal alien trafficking and smuggling, violence, and kidnapping along and across the international borders of the United